

# The STEP on the STAIRS

by ISABEL OSTRANDER

(Continued From Our Last Issue)

Sergeant Barry waited until the racking, tearful sobs had ceased and then he asked quietly: "What had Miriam Vane to do with your wife, Mr. Griswold?"

Griswold raised his head and the detective had the shock of his career. He had thought that the mention of the dog's foolish pet name had recalled the man's dead wife, and that it was genuine grief which had opened the crusty financier's long-closed heart, whatever his relation to the other woman and his share in the mystery. But it was not resurrected sorrow which met his amazed eyes; Griswold's thin, acidulous face had been transformed into that of an exultant fiend and personal fear seemed to be wholly forgotten in the sundering of the hold which he had held over himself.

"Miriam Vane!" The repetition of the name came with a raucous laugh. "Miriam Vane was my wife, my lawful wife, to the hour of her death, and she was too clever to give me an opportunity to free myself from her, at least without the notoriety that she knew I could not afford. It took some cleverer than she, less cautious than I, to free that shot last night, and because of it I owe a debt for the first time in my life, a debt of gratitude which even my money can never repay!"

Despite the astounding revelation Barry did not allow his expression to change, and his tones were suitably persuasive, as he suggested:

"Suppose you tell me the whole story, Mr. Griswold. Our knowledge of the truth may enable us to prevent the notoriety you wish to avoid. How long were you married to the woman who called herself Miriam Vane?"

"For twenty years, ever since she was a girl of sixteen and I a law student of twenty-two down in a little town called Springfield, in Delaware. I've given out these many years that I was a widower because of the disgrace of the whole affair, but it is evident that the truth must be known now and you'd find it out sooner or later."

"Six years our marriage lasted—six years that brought disillusionment to me in spite of her beauty. She was twenty-two, in the full tide of her devilish fascination and knowledge of how to use it when I accepted a clerkship in Cleveland with the law firm of Vener & Scully—he broke off to add:

"Vener had a son, a good-looking weakling with a delicate wife who adored him. The chances are that he would never have amounted to anything, anyway, but the minute he laid eyes on Miriam it was all up with him."

He paused again and his bony hands clenched. Barry ventured:

"Do you mean that she broke up their home and yours?"

"I mean that they ran away together and his sickly wife went mad! She died in a sanitarium within a year."

"But why didn't you divorce her, Mr. Griswold?" asked Barry.

The other groaned.

"Because I thought she was out of my life forever. I thought she would drift the way of all such women if the opportunity to rehabilitate herself by marriage with another infatuated fool was denied her."

"He and she were in some out-of-the-way hole in the south, leading a cat-and-dog's life, when somehow he learned of his wife's madness and death, and in remorse he blew his brains out!"

So that was the explanation of the empty corridors she'd treasured all those years like the symbol of a ghost that could not be laid! Barry whistled softly and then a sudden question came to his mind.

"Mr. Griswold, you told me a while ago that Mrs. Vane was too clever to give you an opportunity to free yourself legally without notoriety which you could not afford. Surely her elopement with young Vener provided you with evidence enough?"

Griswold rose and commenced to pace the floor. "When Vener slipped through her fingers she remembered that she still had a legal hold on me and all her calculating shrewdness came to her aid. When she found me—I was young, ill with typhoid in a Chicago hotel. Men do strange things in delirium and I must have lapped her name."

Some fool specialist thought her presence would pull me through the crisis."

"When I awoke to consciousness she was in full command and I was too weak to do anything. In the eyes of the law I had condoned her offense."

The sergeant nodded and Griswold resumed:

"It was sheer blackmail. I met her terms; a quarterly allowance on condition that she change her name and leave the country."

He halted in his restless pacing and when he spoke again it was with his face averted from the detective.

"Last October the janitor brought a note up to me and I found that she had had the impudence not only to break our agreement by returning to America but had actually domiciled herself beneath the same roof and insisted that it was I who had first broken our agreement by stopping her allowance, and I must come down to her at once for a personal interview."

"I went and then began a series of persecutions which did not cease until last night. She not only demanded an outrageous income but forced me to call upon her at regular intervals, on pain of announcing herself as my wife and raking up that whole wretched scandal I had so carefully lived down."

"I thought when that young fool Gordon Ladd appeared on the scene it might make a difference but she was too infernally clever. Yesterday she demanded a further increase in her allowance and it was the last straw."

"Early in the evening I went down to tell her that I had reached the end and would do no more but she defied me laughingly. I left her in a rage and as I ascended the stairs I distinctly saw young Ladd mounting from his. Understand, Sergeant, I am not trying to cast suspicion on him, I am merely giving you facts

and if she has played fast and loose with him many other and more reckless men than he appears to be have lost their heads over her in Europe, as my foreign agents have kept me informed, since that old Vener affair in Cleveland."

"H'm," Barry exclaimed thoughtfully. "Speaking of that case, Mr. Griswold, did that misguided young man have any relatives except his father?"

"No. When old Vener died about five years ago he left all his money to his law partner, Scully."

"And young Mrs. Vener, the one who died insane; who were her people? What was her maiden name?"

"I don't know. She had met young Vener while visiting some school friend, but on that point my memory is vague. None of her own people came forward at the time of her elopement and when her mind gave way it was old Vener who had her placed in the sanitarium."

"Mr. Griswold, Barry leaned forward impressively toward the man who stood before him. "You realize, of course, that any help you may be able to give us will be helping yourself as well."

"You had the strongest motive for killing her and the testimony of others show that you had plenty of time after leaving her in a rage to return here for a pistol, climb down the fire escape, rush to that vacant house next door of which you possess

the keys, and from one of its windows fire the deadly shot through one of her lighted windows."

"Great heavens!" gasped Griswold. "You know I'm innocent, Sergeant, for if I'd meant to put her out of the way I could have done so long ago and saved the thousands upon thousands that she has wrung from me."

"That vacant house is out of the question unless someone broke in for the only keys to it are in my office and my clerk can testify that they have remained undisturbed for months in a strongbox under his charge. If someone had not concealed himself in her studio itself during her absence for dinner there remains only the fire escape."

"No one could have come up the fire escape without being seen by Policeman Boyle, who stood just below that has been established."

Barry added, still with deliberate intent: "Suppose he had been concealed on the fire escape for some little time before Boyle appeared on the rounds, he must still after the crime have ascended instead of going down to the street level and where could he have gone? It has been proved that the roof offered no means of shelter. I can vouch for Professor Semynov, and Miss Shaw was in her studio at the time, so there remains only your apartment."

CHAPTER X

The venerable house which had once held the law offices of Vener & Scully had long since given place to a modern business block. Fourteen years was indeed a long time, as Griswold had said, but Scully would surely recall the details of the tragedy which had made him his partner's heir. However, when Sergeant Barry had run the gamut of the old building and found himself behind the door marked "Philip Scully—Private," he saw confronting him a well-groomed young man who obviously had not reached the age of 30.

The young man rose and extended an affable hand.

"Mr. Barry? What can I do for you, sir?"

He paused as Barry shook his head.

"I'm afraid I've made a mistake. I've come well recommended, but it was to another Mr. Scully, a law partner of the late Mr. Vener."

"Indeed! I take it that you are a stranger here, Mr. Barry. You are referring to my father, Daniel Scully, but he gave up active practice some five years ago. I took his place."

"There are some things from which a man cannot retire," Barry interrupted. "I come well recommended—by the district attorney of New York City."

(Continued in Our Next Issue.) (Copyright, 1922, NEA Service.)

Choice selection cut flowers and blooming plants. South Bend Floral Co., 122 N. Michigan st. 23-tf-23

25 per cent Reduction Sale, Vernon's 334-tf

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Create Gas, Sourness and Pain How to Treat.

Medical authorities state that nearly nine-tenths of the cases of stomach trouble (indigestion, sourness, burning gas, bloating, nausea, etc., are due to an excess of hydrochloric acid in the stomach and not as some believe to a lack of digestive juices. The delicate stomach lining is irritated, digestion is delayed and food sores, causing the disagreeable symptoms which every stomach sufferer knows so well.

Artificial digestants are not needed in such cases and may do real harm. Try taking aside all digestive aids and instead get from any druggist a few ounces of Epsom's Magnesia and take a teaspoonful in a quart glass of water right after eating. This sweetens the stomach, prevents the formation of excess acid and there is no sourness, gas or pain. Epsom's Magnesia, in powder or tablet form—never liquid or milk—is harmless to the stomach, inexpensive to take and is the most efficient form of magnesia for stomach purposes. It is used by thousands of people who enjoy their meals with not more fear of indigestion—Ad.

RIES JANUARY SALE.

This year's January Clearance Sale presents for your approval the very best Quality Furniture back at FLEA-MARK Prices. Full-sized bed davenports in genuine leather, \$65; beds of brass steel or iron reduced, floor lamps with silk shades, \$11.50 and up. These and many other bargains in Bedroom and Dining Room suites await you. Convenient terms. 5-tf

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Here's an easy way to save \$2, and yet have the best cough remedy you ever tried.

You've probably heard of this well-known plan of making cough syrup at home. But have you ever used it? Thousands of families, the world over, feel that they could hardly keep house without it. It's simple and cheap, but the way it takes hold of a cough will soon earn it a permanent place in your home.

Into a pint bottle, pour 2 1/2 ounces of Pinex; then add plain granulated sugar syrup to fill up the pint. Or, if desired, use clarified molasses, honey, or corn syrup, instead of sugar syrup. Either way, it tastes good, never spoils, and gives you a full pint of better cough remedy than you could buy ready-made for three times its cost.

It is really wonderful how quickly this home-made remedy conquers a cough—usually in 24 hours or less. It seems to penetrate through every air passage, loosens a dry, hoarse or tight cough, lifts the phlegm, heals the membranes, and gives almost immediate relief. Splendid for throat tickle, hoarseness, croup, bronchitis and bronchial asthma.

Pinex is a highly concentrated compound of genuine Norway pine extract, and has been used for generations for throat and chest ailments. To avoid disappointment ask your druggist for "2 1/2 ounces of Pinex" with directions, and don't accept anything else. Guaranteed to give absolute satisfaction or money refunded. The Pinex Co., Ft. Wayne, Ind.

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By the huge cut in price. This Great Shoe Demonstration will be one of unusual opportunity—and even though you may live far from South Bend, the big savings you can make will more than repay you for your expenditure of time and money in a trip to this Sale. Plan to come early—as the prices will positively astonish you and buy your shoe needs for the whole family.

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No matter what kind of a coat you're looking for you will in all probability find it here—and for less money. Here you will find an assortment of quality coats. We select each garment with care—it must be made right—it must have style—it must contain only dependable all wool fabrics—it must be the high standard established by Charles B. Sax and Company quality, otherwise it finds no room here. We are selling great numbers of fine coats. It's because the styles are the newest for mid-winter—because the materials are dependable and the prices lowest. You'll profit by visiting this store before you make your coat selection.

Coats at Half Price and Less \$10.00, \$15.00, \$20.00, \$25.00, \$30.00, \$35.00

Money Saving Specials

Women's Outing Flannel Gowns in white and pink and blue stripes, special at \$1.00  
Men's Ribbed Shirts and Drawers, formerly \$1.25 value .89c  
One lot of Jewelry, pins, brooches, etc., 50c value at .29c  
Broken line of Crochet Cotton, very special, ball .50c  
Women's handkerchiefs, extra quality, box of 3, reduced to .63c  
Women's embroidered corner handkerchiefs, 25c value .17c  
Heavy weight, extra quality Cape Gloves, formerly \$4.50, special, pair at \$2.75  
Muff Foundations, we are closing them out at less than Half Price.  
Misses' Flannel Middies, good quality, special at \$3.75  
27-inch White Outing Flannel, fine heavy quality, special, yard .19c  
Turkish Towels, good quality, large size with colored borders, reduced to .67c

DRESS SKIRTS Values to \$15.00 at \$5.00

One lot of Wool Dress Skirts in navy blue serge and a few plaids. Skirts that formerly sold up to \$15.00, Sale Price \$5.00

OVER BLOUSES Values to \$10.00 at \$2.49

One lot of Wool Jersey Overblouses in brown, navy and green. Formerly sold up to \$10.00, Sale Price \$2.49



FUR COATS Half Price

While others are offering 1-4 to 1-3 off on Fur Coats we are letting ours go at just half former prices. There are only a few left from our big stock, so if you want one don't delay.



New Arrivals in Spring Millinery

This collection embraces the new and popular combinations of materials and colors of fancy or novelty hair braid combined with brims of straws; others have Milan straw crowns with brims of facings of silk or satin; also novelty straw braids with pretty combinations, trimmed with fancy ornaments, flowers and fruits; they are specially priced at \$5.00, \$6.50, \$7.50, \$10.00



Silk Dresses Regrouped and Repriced for Quick Clearance

Dresses in these lots were formerly priced at \$9.75, \$14.75 and \$22.75. Now for a final clearance we have just 2 lots, \$9.75 and \$14.75. We have regrouped all the dresses that were formerly \$22.75 in the \$14.75 lot and the \$14.75 lot go at \$9.75. We believe these to be the best dress values ever offered to the South Bend public.

Silk Dresses that formerly sold up to \$39.50 on Sale \$9.75 Thursday

Silk Dresses that formerly sold up to \$59.50 on Sale \$14.75 Thursday

Middy Dresses \$15.00 Values \$9.75

Misses' 2-piece All Wool Middy Dresses of navy serge, trimmed in white emblem on sleeves; formerly \$15.00 value, Sale Price \$9.75

Money Saving Specials

January White Sale of Muslin Underwear. It's a real money-saving opportunity. Four lots, special at \$1.00, \$1.45 and \$1.95  
Wool Sweaters, slipover, tuxedo and coat styles, formerly sold up to \$10.00, special .375  
Children's Velour Hats, formerly sold at \$2.49, special .98c  
Large hank of Sunlight Knitting Yarn, special .53c  
Llama Wool Yarn, not all colors, special, ball .39c  
Mercerized Damask, 75c value, yard 59c; \$1.00 value yard .79c  
Part Linen Damask, 70, 72 inch, \$2.25 value, yard \$1.79  
70-inch Linen Damask, \$3.50 value, yard \$2.98  
White Wash Blouses, \$2.50, \$2.59 values .139  
Wool Jersey Overblouses, formerly sold up to \$10.00, at \$2.49